ECLIPSE COMICS
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1
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FIRST ISSUE!
Scorpio Rose
also featuring:
DOCTOR
ORIENT

THE GRAIL

Steve Englehart

This is the comic that changed the comic book industry.

Just three short years ago, the industry's favorite game was something called "Screw the Freelancer." It was a simple game, with simple rules: the conglomerate owned all rights to the freelancer's ideas, and they paid for them what they felt like paying. The freelancer, it appeared, had no option but to play the game because he got no work at all if he objected. This was a venerable game, which has worked well for some forty years; unfortunately, four years earlier I'd come to the conclusion that life was too worthwhile to spend it getting screwed. So when, in 1980, D.C. tried to play with me over two *Madame Xanadu* scripts, I handed them a surprise. I took my stories and walked.

The game rules had clearly changed but not one of us knew how much.

I went to Marvel—the only other company extant—and offered Al Milgrom the stories. He said yes, but Jim Shooter had the final say, and Jim Shooter was out of town, so we were obliged to wait.

That afternoon, though, the word of what had happened spread as far as Jan and Dean Mullaney, who were planning a new magazine. Dean called and offered me the first straight comics deal ever to include both professional rates *and rights.*

The rules had changed again.

Eclipse Magazine set about securing other contributors and met quick success with its offer of artistic freedom and the best deal in comics (Reality! What a concept!). Jan and Dean commissioned me to do two new stories—*Coyote* and *Sundancer*—and settled down to publish happily ever after. Books sometimes came out weeks late, but—*they came out.* Others might have given up when the going got tough, but Eclipse never did. Where problems existed, Jan and Dean sat down with the affected party and reasoned it out together. They never broke faith with anyone.

More rule changes.

It's been three years now. All the other new companies have followed Eclipse's lead, and so has Marvel through its *Epic* comic line; even D.C. has finally gotten on board. So we've come full circle, back to this story: the first of three concerning someone who might once have been Madame Xanadu, but has now expanded to become the one and only *Scorpio Rose.* Both Marshall and I feel this is one of the best stories we've ever done, singly or together, and find it only fitting that the story which changed this industry should become the first Eclipse miniseries.

No matter what anyone tells you, there is justice in this world.

Notes from Surf City by Jan and Dean Mullaney

Not only is this comic the beginning of the first Eclipse mini-series, as Steve says, it holds yet another distinction: this is our first comic book to be printed on the high quality Baxter paper. And it certainly won't be our last.

Long-time Eclipse readers know that we've been dedicated to bringing you top quality comics—both in content *and* packaging—since 1978 when we published the first graphic album ever produced for the "direct sales" market.

For you readers who are just now sampling the Eclipse experience, first we want to say "welcome aboard." We think you'll really enjoy *Scorpio Rose,* as well as our other comics. They're all sold exclusively through the "direct sales" comic book stores and selected newsstands. If you have any problem locating Eclipse comics in your area, drop us a line. As long as our supply lasts, we're offering all back issues for cover price only. This offer includes *Destroyer Duck* # 1 and *Sabre* # 1! We want to share the excitement with all of you.

As for the future, we're switching almost all of our titles to this white Baxter paper, so that in a couple of months, Eclipse will be the first comics company to give you a complete line of Baxter books! We've been pushing for quality paper and printing since 1978 and we're not stopping here!

But none of this is going to be any fun unless we hear from you. And having fun is where it's at, isn't it? So, please, write and let us know what you think of these comics. There are times—especially when it's close to deadline—when your letters really keep us going. Send all your letters to Dean, who's heading our Midwest office. The address is:

Eclipse Comics
105 Austin Avenue
Columbia, MO 65201

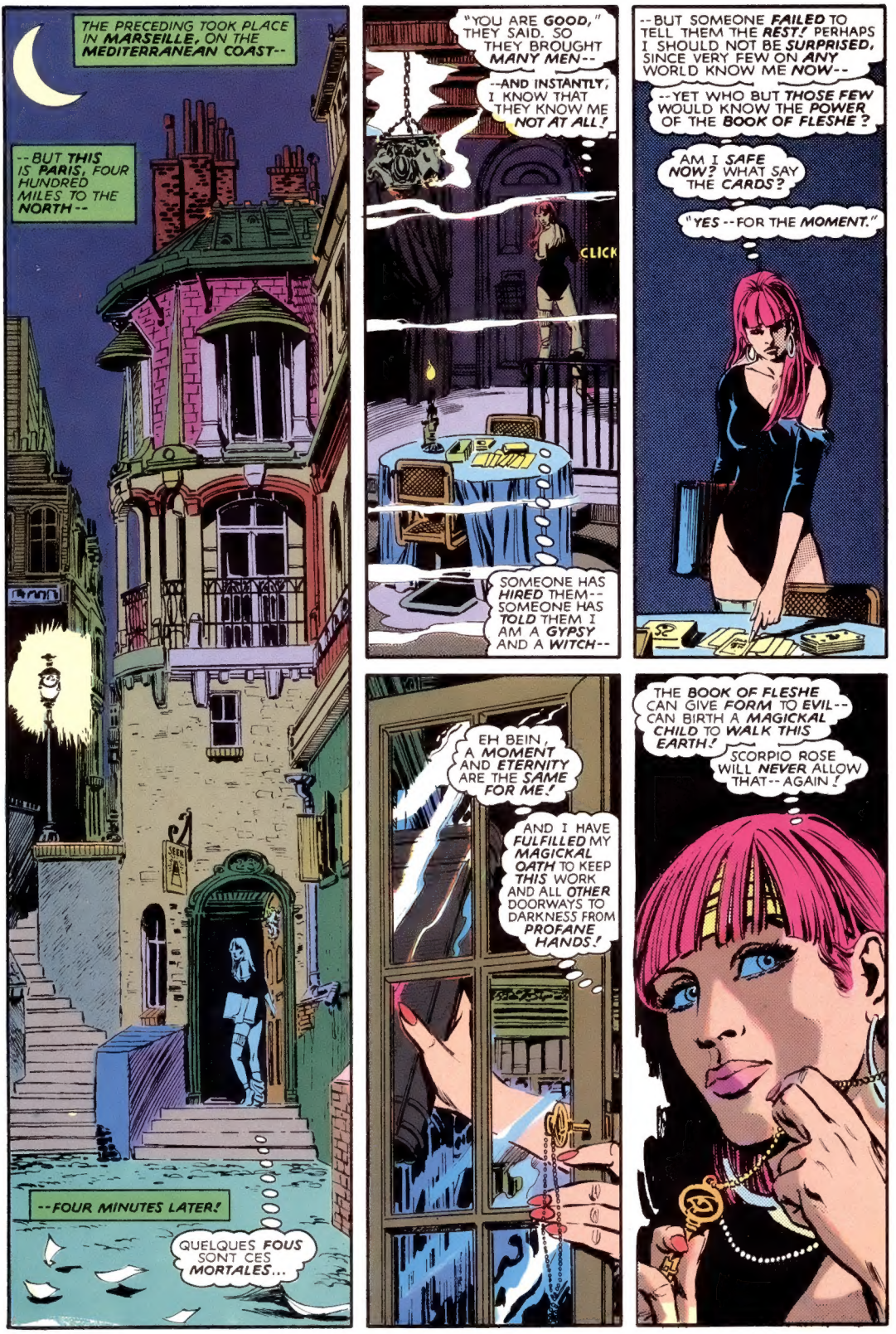
Enough. Read on and rave on!

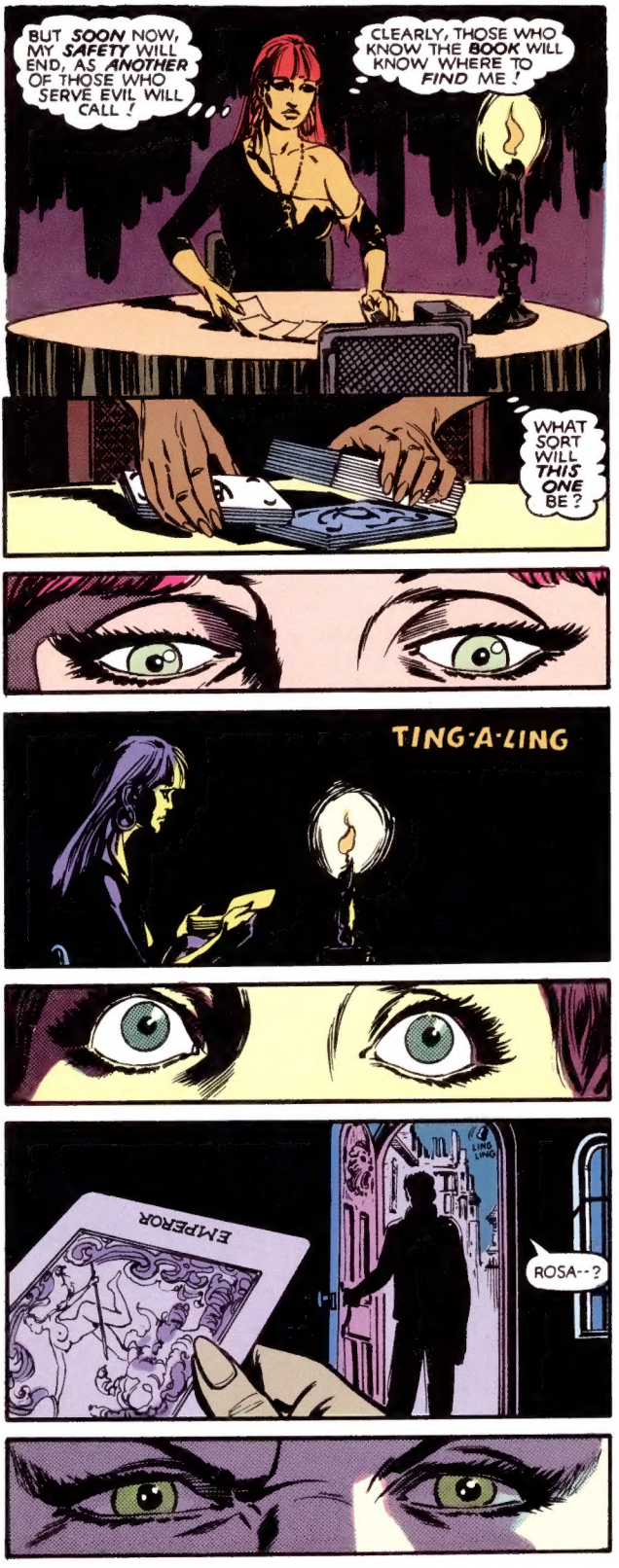
SCORPIO ROSE Vol. 1, No. 1, January 1983. Published bi-monthly by Eclipse Enterprises, 81 Delaware Street, Staten Island, New York 10304. SCORPIO ROSE (including all prominent characters featured in this story and the distinctive likenesses thereof) copyright © 1982 Steve Englehart and Marshall Rogers. DR. ORIENT (including all prominent characters featured in this story and the distinctive likenesses thereof) copyright © 1982 Frank Lauria. Entire contents copyright = 1982 Eclipse Enterprises. All rights reserved. Price $1.50 per copy. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution, is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. Printed in Canada.

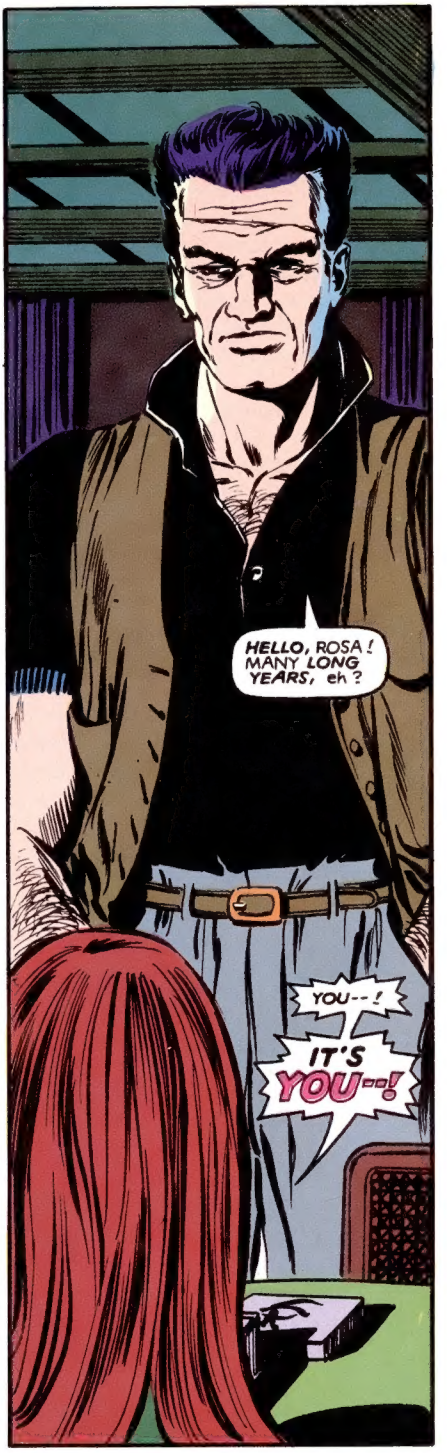
THE BATMAN--
MISTER MIRACLE--
MADAME XANADU--
COYOTE --
And now--
Scorpio Rose
by STEVE ENGLEHART & MARSHALL ROGERS
WITH THE LEGENDARY TOM PALMER FOR COLOR AND EMBELLISHMENT
AND THE INIMITABLE ORZECHOWSKI LETTERING
BON SOIR, MESSIEURS! YOUR JOURNEYS HAVE ENDED-- YOU HAVE FOUND THE BOOK YOU SEEK!
BUT THE BOOK OF FLESHE BELONGS TO ME--
-- AND WHICH OF YOU CAN PLUCK THIS ROSE?!!

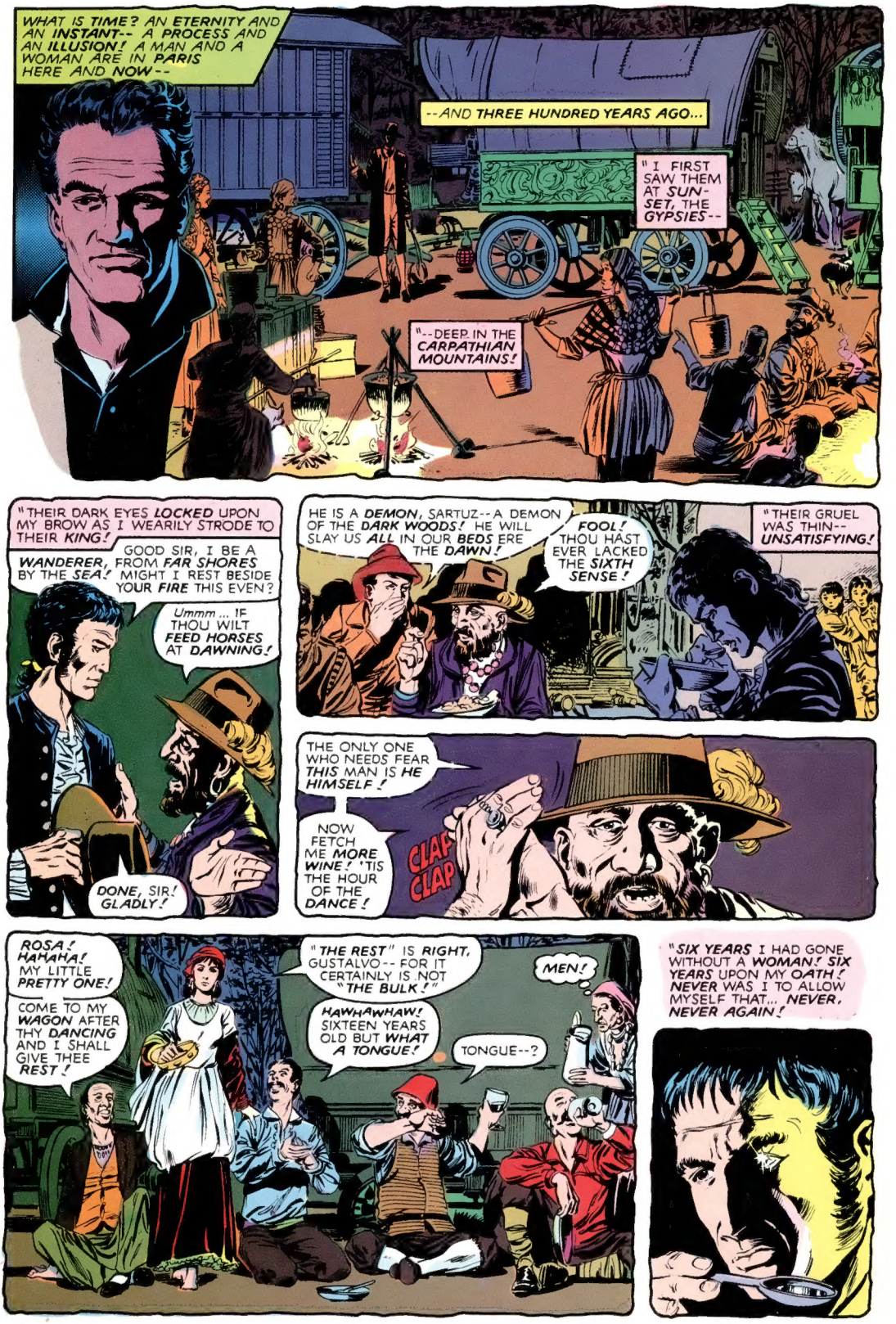
ANY ONE OF US, MA'MSELLE !
OR ALL OF US TOGETHER ! MACHTS NICHTS ZU MIR !
YOU'RE GOOD, LADY ! WE KNOW THAT !
THAT'S WHY THERE'S THREE MORE BLOKES AT EACH OF THE OTHER DOORS !
THIS TIME YOU'RE DEAD !
alice
DO YOU KNOW THE TAROT, MESSIEURS ?
DO YOU KNOW THE HIGH PRIESTESS ?
SHE RULES ALL MATTERS OF LIFE AND DEATH--
--BUT SHE CAN NEVER DIE !
GOTT IM HIMMEL ! THE BLADE-- MY BLOOD-- !
YOU WITCH !
YOU'VE NO OTHER WEAPONS IN THAT LEOTARD !

I HAVE MY BODY!
I HAVE MY WITS!
AND I HAVE THREE HUNDRED YEARS OF EXPERIENCE WITH YOUR KIND!
THREE HUNDRED?
WHAT'S SHE TALKING ABOUT?
MORE OF THEM, AS PROMISED!
I CAN SEE THE HATRED IN THEIR EYES FROM HERE--
--I CAN HEAR IT IN THE POUNDING OF THEIR FEET!
WOULD I BE SO AT EASE IF I COULD FEEL IT?
THERE! THERE SHE IS! THERE!
AT EASE? YES, I SUPPOSE SO--
--THE EASE SHARED BY ALL THOSE WHO SLEEP SIX FEET BENEATH THE EARTH!
SCORPIO ROSE: HIGH PRIESTESS BUT NEVER EMPRESS--
--SOUGHT BY ALL BUT SEEKER OF NONE!
GO FOR IT, GYPSY BITCH!
WE'VE GOT HER BOXED IN! SHE'S TRAPPED HERSELF!
GET TO THE OTHER LADDER!
BUT--
SHE'S GONE!


THE PRECEDING TOOK PLACE IN MARSEILLE, ON THE MEDITERRANEAN COAST--
--BUT THIS IS PARIS, FOUR HUNDRED MILES TO THE NORTH--
--FOUR MINUTES LATER!
QUELQUES FOUS SONT CES MORTALES...
"YOU ARE GOOD," THEY SAID. SO THEY BROUGHT MANY MEN--
--AND INSTANTLY, I KNOW THAT THEY KNOW ME NOT AT ALL!
CLICK
SOMEONE HAS HIRED THEM-- SOMEONE HAS TOLD THEM I AM A GYPSY AND A WITCH--
--BUT SOMEONE FAILED TO TELL THEM THE REST! PERHAPS I SHOULD NOT BE SURPRISED, SINCE VERY FEW ON ANY WORLD KNOW ME NOW--
--YET WHO BUT THOSE FEW WOULD KNOW THE POWER OF THE BOOK OF FLESHE?
AM I SAFE NOW? WHAT SAY THE CARDS?
"YES --FOR THE MOMENT."
EH BEIN, A MOMENT AND ETERNITY ARE THE SAME FOR ME!
AND I HAVE FULFILLED MY MAGICKAL OATH TO KEEP THIS WORK AND ALL OTHER DOORWAYS TO DARKNESS FROM PROFANE HANDS!
THE BOOK OF FLESHE CAN GIVE FORM TO EVIL-- CAN BIRTH A MAGICKAL CHILD TO WALK THIS EARTH!
SCORPIO ROSE WILL NEVER ALLOW THAT-- AGAIN!


BUT SOON NOW, MY SAFETY WILL END, AS ANOTHER OF THOSE WHO SERVE EVIL WILL CALL!
CLEARLY, THOSE WHO KNOW THE BOOK WILL KNOW WHERE TO FIND ME!
WHAT SORT WILL THIS ONE BE?
TING-A-LING
EMPEROR
LING LING
ROSA--?


HELLO, ROSA! MANY LONG YEARS, eh?
YOU--!
IT'S YOU!!!


WHAT IS TIME? AN ETERNITY AND AN INSTANT-- A PROCESS AND AN ILLUSION! A MAN AND A WOMAN ARE IN PARIS HERE AND NOW--
--AND THREE HUNDRED YEARS AGO...
"I FIRST SAW THEM AT SUNSET, THE GYPSIES--
"--DEEP IN THE CARPATHIAN MOUNTAINS!
"THEIR DARK EYES LOCKED UPON MY BROW AS I WEARILY STRODE TO THEIR KING!
GOOD SIR, I BE A WANDERER, FROM FAR SHORES BY THE SEA! MIGHT I REST BESIDE YOUR FIRE THIS EVEN?
Ummm... IF THOU WILT FEED HORSES AT DAWNING!
DONE, SIR! GLADLY!
HE IS A DEMON, SARTUZ--A DEMON OF THE DARK WOODS! HE WILL SLAY US ALL IN OUR BEDS ERE THE DAWN!
FOOL! THOU HAST EVER LACKED THE SIXTH SENSE!
"THEIR GRUEL WAS THIN--UNSATISFYING!
THE ONLY ONE WHO NEEDS FEAR THIS MAN IS HE HIMSELF!
NOW FETCH ME MORE WINE! 'TIS THE HOUR OF THE DANCE!
CLAP CLAP
ROSA! HAHAHA! MY LITTLE PRETTY ONE!
COME TO MY WAGON AFTER THY DANCING AND I SHALL GIVE THEE REST!
"THE REST" IS RIGHT, GUSTALVO-- FOR IT CERTAINLY IS NOT "THE BULK!"
HAWHAWHAW! SIXTEEN YEARS OLD BUT WHAT A TONGUE!
MEN!
TONGUE--?
"SIX YEARS I HAD GONE WITHOUT A WOMAN! SIX YEARS UPON MY OATH! NEVER WAS I TO ALLOW MYSELF THAT... NEVER, NEVER AGAIN!

"BUT--
"HER EVERY MOVEMENT HAD BEEN CALCULATED TO ENFLAME!
"NO, NOT CALCULATED-- THAT'S WRONG! HER MOVEMENTS WERE INSTINCTIVE! THERE WAS NOTHING IN HER WHEN SHE DANCED BUT THE UNSULLIED SPIRIT OF A WOMAN!
"AND CURSE ALL DEVILS, IT ENFLAMED ME!
GOOD WANDERER, THINE EYES TELL ME THOU HAST SEEN MUCH!
I HAVE SEEN LITTLE! WOULDST THOU TELL ME OF THY TRAVELS?
LITTLE GIRL, I HAVE SEEN TOO MUCH! FOR THINE OWN SAKE, DANCE FOR ANOTHER THIS NIGHT!

FOOF! "LITTLE GIRL" IS IT?
I SUPPOSE THOU WOULDST CALL THESE MOUNTAINS HILLS, AND OUR ROARING FIRE AN EMBER!
HEE HEE! SAUCY WENCH!
TOO, SAUCY, BEARDED ONE! IN THE LANDS FROM WHENCE I COME--
AND WHERE, PRAYTELL, ARE THESE LANDS?
Oh, DO THOU RELAX, GOOD SIR! THE OLD MEN MAY CALL YOU DEMON, BUT I AM A MORE MODERN SORT, SO DO NOT HUNKER SO!
WHAT CARE WE FOR THE SUPERSTITIONS OF OLD MEN?
YOUNG MEN, TOO, MAY HARBOR SUPERSTITIONS, DANCING GIRL!
ONE WHICH I FAVOR IS NOT PROVOKING GYPSIES IN THEIR OWN CAMP!
THOU MAYST YET PROVOKE ME, SIR!
AND MY NAME IS ROSA!
AND YOURS--?
IGOR GRAVESEND... AT THY SERVICE!
NOW PLEASE--
I'D WAGER THOU'ST SEEN BUDAPEST! AM I RIGHT?
I--YES!
TELL ME, IS IT BEAUTIFUL? AS BEAUTIFUL AS THEY SAY?
BUDAPEST IS... VERY BEAUTIFUL!
"IN REALITY, OF COURSE, IT WAS A CLOISTERED, CRUMBLING PIT FOR THOSE WITHOUT MONEY!
I HAVE NEVER BEEN TO THE CITY, BUT I SHALL GO, ONE DAY!
"FROM THE MOMENT OF THAT LIE, THE DIE WAS CAST!
WOULDST THOU TAKE ME TO BUDAPEST, IGOR?
ROSA, I AM A SOLITARY MAN! I CARE NOT FOR COMPANY!
BESIDES, I JOURNEY TOWARD ST. PETERSBURG!
THE HOME OF THE FABULOUS TSAR? WELL THEN, DOST THOU KNOW OF THE SHORTCUT TO THE NORTH?
Ah, I SEE NOT! THEN COME WITH ME!
THE FOREST IS TREACHEROUS!
THE MEN DO SAY THAT DEMONS DWELL THERE!
"OH GOD, IF SUCH THERE BE, WHY DID YOU LET ME GO WITH HER THAT NIGHT?
"AND WHY DID I GO?

"THE MOUNTAINS WERE SILVER IN THE MOONLIGHT, SAVE WHERE THE STONES THREW SABLE SHADOWS! A QUICKENING BREEZE WITH THE SCENT OF OLD PINE FANNED MY BURNING CHEEK!
" HER ANKLETS STARTLED RABBITS IN THE THICKET!
I HAVE TRAVELED THIS WAY ONCE BEFORE, ROSA!
IT WAS MANY YEARS AGO, BUT THERE WAS NO SHORTCUT THEN!
"NONE KNOWN TO EUROPEANS," IS THY MEANING, IGOR-- BUT WE GYPSIES HAVE KNOWN!
AND IF THY MEANING'S ALSO THAT THOU HAST NO TRUST IN ME... WHY THEN HAST THOU COME?
IS IT TO HUMILIATE ME? ART THOU A CRUEL MAN, THEN?
NO, ROSA-- NOT CRUEL!
RATHER, A VICTIM OF CRUEL FATE!
I KNOW! WE GYPSIES KNOW PEOPLE, TOO! I SAW IT IN THINE EYES AT FIRST--
--AND THEN IN THY PALMS! THE FRACTURED STARS, THE MYSTIC M-- THOSE FRIGHTENED ME FOR A MOMENT!
BUT THEN I SAW THE HEART LINE CROSSED WITH A BLOOD-RED SQUARE, THE HEAD LINE DEEP AND DOUBLED--
--THE ENDLESS TRAVEL LINES...
PERHAPS THOU HAST SPURNED SOMEONE'S LOVE-- A NOBLEWOMAN'S, PERHAPS--
--BUT I CAN TAKE AWAY THY PAIN, POOR IGOR--
ROSA, I-- I LONG TO TAKE THEE IN MINE ARMS, BUT--
IT NEED NOT BE LOVE, AT FIRST! LOVE COMES LATER! GYPSIES KNOW!
IT IS NO GOOD FOR THEE TO BE ALONE--
--AND IT IS NO GOOD FOR ME HERE!
TAKE ME, IGOR! TAKE ME!
" BUT BY THEN, OF COURSE, I HAD HEARD HIM!
ZACHARIASZ!
AYE, ZACHARIASZ-- THE MAN TO WHOM THOU WAST PROMISED, VIXEN!

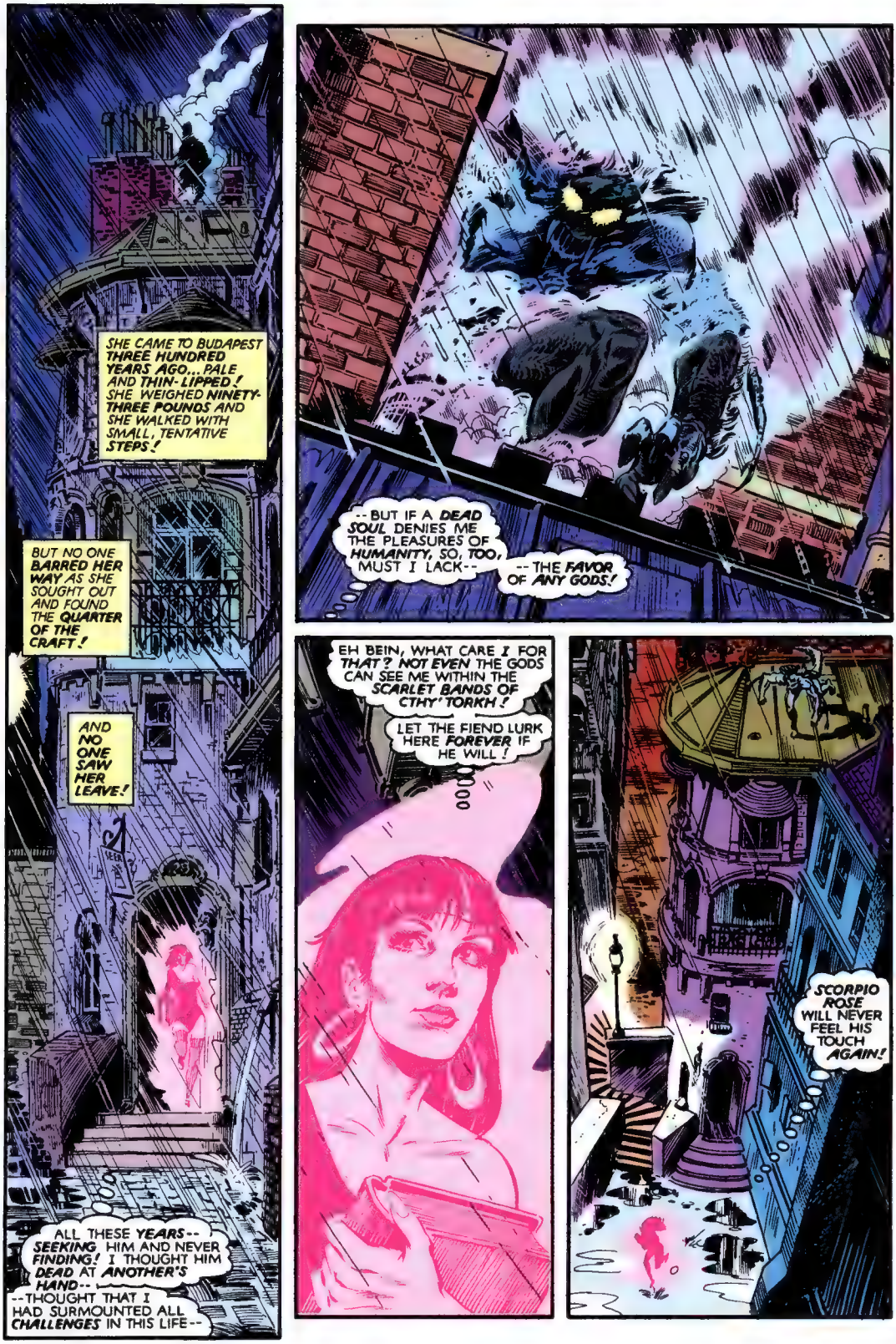
MY FRIEND, NOTHING HAPPENED!
TAKEST THOU ME FOR A FOOL?
STAND ASIDE, WENCH, AND SEE WHAT I DO TO THIS AND ANY OTHER MAN WHO COMES BETWEEN US!
"THE DAGGER WAS SILVER--!
STOP, ZACHARIASZ, STOP!
IT WAS NAUGHT BUT A GAME-- YES, TO MAKE THEE JEALOUS!
EVEN NOW THOU DOST SPIT OUT THY LIES!
ONE MORE AND I SHALL GUT THEE TOO!
"BUT HE WAS SLOW, COMPARED TO ME--!
I WILL LEAVE HERE, ZACHARIASZ! DO NOT PRESS THIS FURTHER!
"DO NOT PRESS THIS!" "DANCE FOR ANOTHER!"
THOU ART TOO SLY BY HALF, PROWLING WOLF!
NOW DIE!!
FAST THOU ART, BUT I BE STEADY! I'LL COME AT THEE AGAIN AND AGAIN!
THIS BLADE HAS BEEN BLOODIED NINE TIMES--
--AND THE PRIZE WE FIGHT FOR IS WORTH THE TENTH!
YES, YES! FIGHT FOR ME!
AND TO THE VICTOR, THE SPOILS!

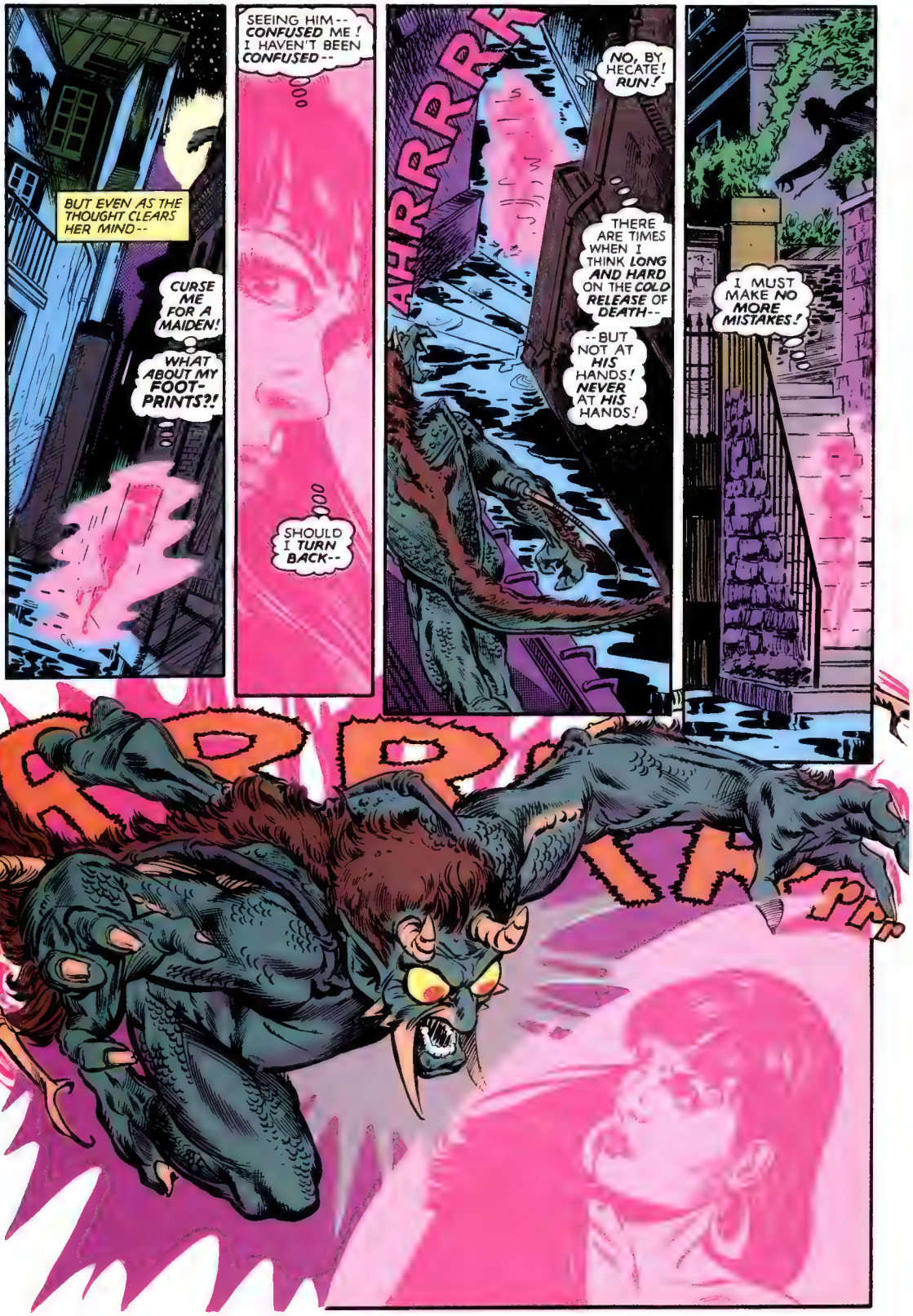
KRA
KOOM!
DITURAMU! HE'S BEEN STRUCK BY LIGHTN!!!!!!!!
"AND THEN I WAS NO LONGER THERE!

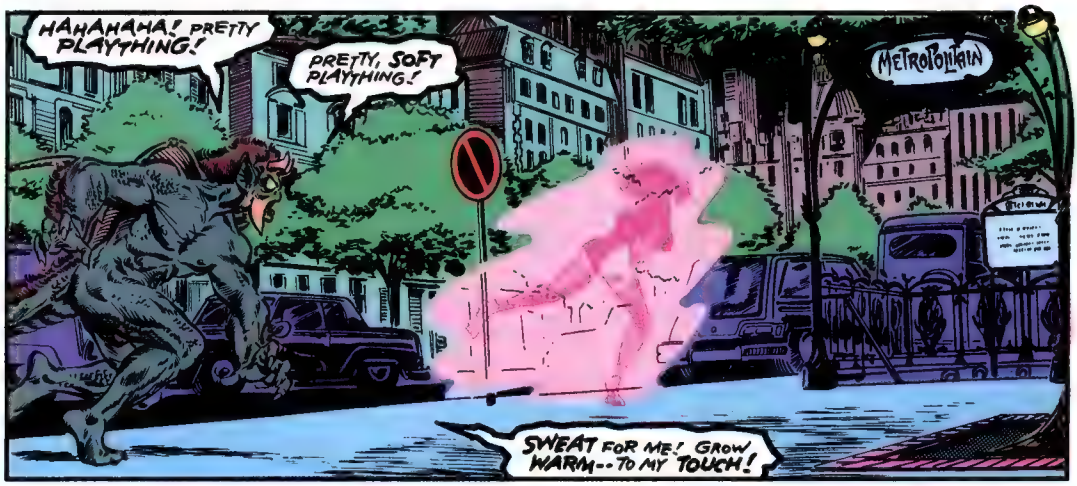
RIP
RIP

WHAT IS TIME? THERE ARE THOSE WHO SAY IT CAN HEAL ALL WOUNDS!
BUT MOST OF THESE ARE MERELY GLIB-- AND ALL OF THEM ARE MORTAL!
THREE HUNDRED YEARS! THREE HUNDRED YEARS I'VE LIVED BECAUSE OF YOU!
YOU RAPED MY BODY-- BAD ENOUGH-- BUT YOU ALSO RAPED MY SOUL!
THE PART OF ME THAT FEELS-- THE PART THAT LAUGHS AND CRIES AND LIVES AND DIES--
--THE PART THAT MAKES A HUMAN HUMAN--
--THAT PART YOU SHATTERED BEYOND REPAIR, SO THAT I CANNOT DIE-- OR LIVE!
I WARNED YOU!
DO YOU THINK IT MY CHOICE THAT A FIEND LIVES WITHIN ME? IT HAS BEEN MY CURSE FOR TWICE THREE HUNDRED YEARS--
--AND I AM FURTHER CURSED TO RETAIN MY SOUL WHEN I AM AS YOU SEE ME NOW!
I TRIED TO CONTROL MYSELF THEN! I'VE HATED MYSELF SINCE THE MOMENT IGOR GRAVESEND REAWOKE--
--BUT NONE OF THAT AVAILS ME!
I WHO WAS ONCE BUT A MAN AM NOW UNDER THE SWAY OF THE GODS! IF I HAD A CHOICE I WOULD NEVER HAVE NEARED YOU AGAIN--
--THOUGH I HAVE WATCHED YOU OVER THE YEARS, FROM AFAR--
--BUT I HAVE NO CHOICE! MY MASTERS WANT THE BOOK OF FLESHE, AND THEY WILL SEND THE FIEND FOR YOU VERY SOON!
IGOR GRAVESEND WISHED ONLY TO WARN YOU--
-- AND TO APOLOGIZE--
--BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE!

APOLOGIZE?! PTUI! I AM SCORPIO ROSE NOW!
APOLOGIES PAY NO PRICE WITH ME! THE CARDS WILL TELL ME WHAT TO DO!
. . . ALL THESE YEARS I HAVE RELIED ON MY CARDS, AND THE STARS AND MEN'S PALMS AND THE OTHER MYSTIC ORACLES--
-- TO FILL THE BLACK VOID WHERE MY LIGHT SHOULD BE!
XIII
DEATH!
BUT NANA WAS RIGHT: "DEATH" IS BUT A WORD FOR ANY TRANS-FORMATION--
RUMMMMMMMMMMBLE
-- A TRANSFORMATION--
-- SUCH AS THAT WHICH IS MARKED BY THE STORM--
-- AND SUCH AS THAT WHICH I MUST MAKE IN MY CIRCUMSTANCES!
I WOULD FIGHT HIM IF I COULD--
--BUT EVEN NOW I CANNOT!
SCARLET BANDS WRAP ME TIGHT-- HOLD ME SAFE FROM THE NIGHT!


SHE CAME TO BUDAPEST THREE HUNDRED YEARS AGO... PALE AND THIN-LIPPED! SHE WEIGHED NINETY-THREE POUNDS AND SHE WALKED WITH SMALL, TENTATIVE STEPS!
BUT NO ONE BARRED HER WAY AS SHE SOUGHT OUT AND FOUND THE QUARTER OF THE CRAFT!
AND NO ONE SAW HER LEAVE!
ALL THESE YEARS-- SEEKING HIM AND NEVER FINDING! I THOUGHT HIM DEAD AT ANOTHER'S HAND--
--THOUGHT THAT I HAD SURMOUNTED ALL CHALLENGES IN THIS LIFE--
--BUT IF A DEAD SOUL DENIES ME THE PLEASURES OF HUMANITY, SO, TOO, MUST I LACK--
-- THE FAVOR OF ANY GODS!
EH BEIN, WHAT CARE I FOR THAT? NOT EVEN THE GODS CAN SEE ME WITHIN THE SCARLET BANDS OF CTHY'TORKH!
LET THE FIEND LURK HERE FOREVER IF HE WILL!
SCORPIO ROSE WILL NEVER FEEL HIS TOUCH AGAIN!

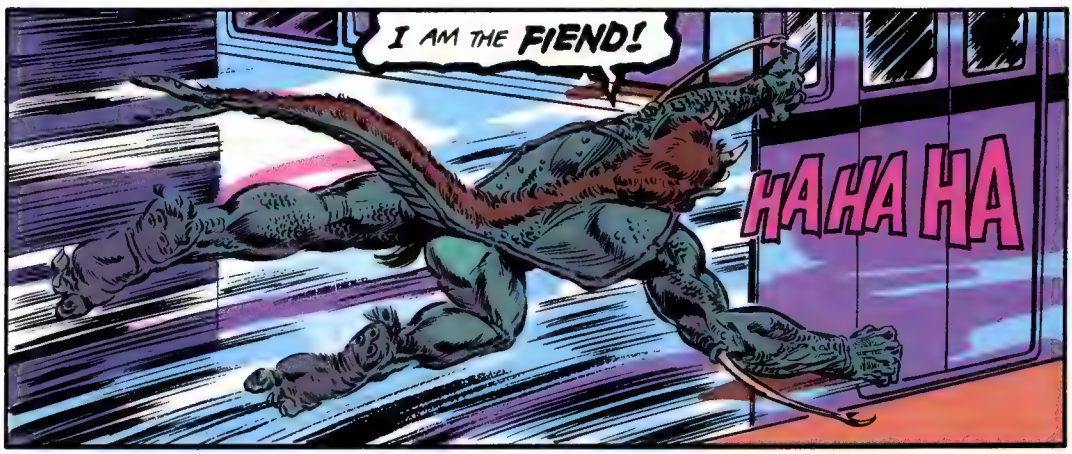

BUT EVEN AS THE THOUGHT CLEARS HER MIND--
CURSE ME FOR A MAIDEN!
WHAT ABOUT MY FOOT-PRINTS?!
SEEING HIM-- CONFUSED ME! I HAVEN'T BEEN CONFUSED--
SHOULD I TURN BACK--
AHRRRRR
NO, BY HECATE! RUN!
THERE ARE TIMES WHEN I THINK LONG AND HARD ON THE COLD RELEASE OF DEATH--
--BUT NOT AT HIS HANDS! NEVER AT HIS HANDS!
I MUST MAKE NO MORE MISTAKES!
RRR

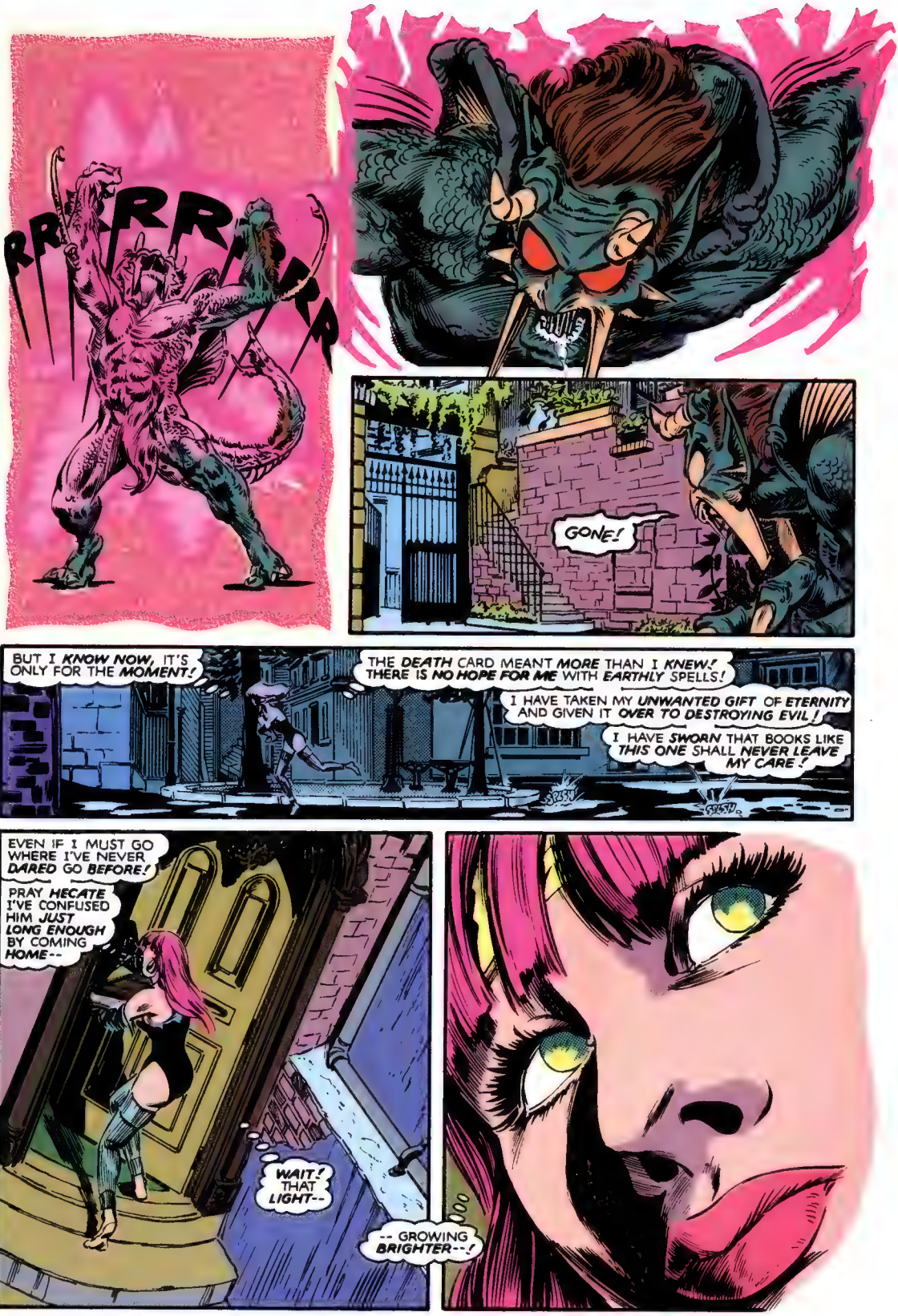

HAHAHAHA! PRETTY PLAYTHING!
PRETTY, SOFT PLAYTHING!
METROPOLITAN
SWEAT FOR ME! GROW WARM--TO MY TOUCH!

KENT BAR

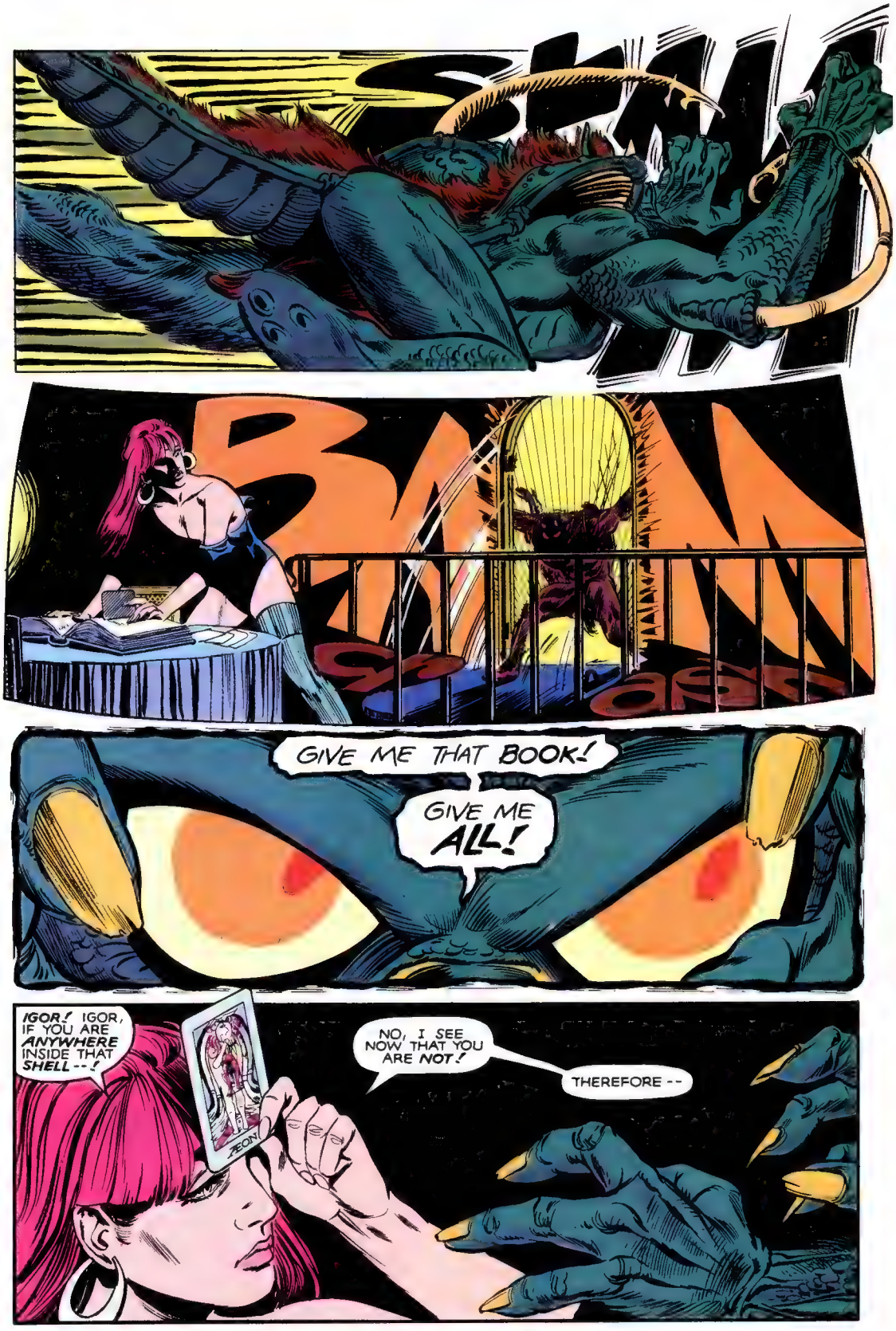
THIS TIME I WANT YOUR BODY AND YOUR BLOOD!

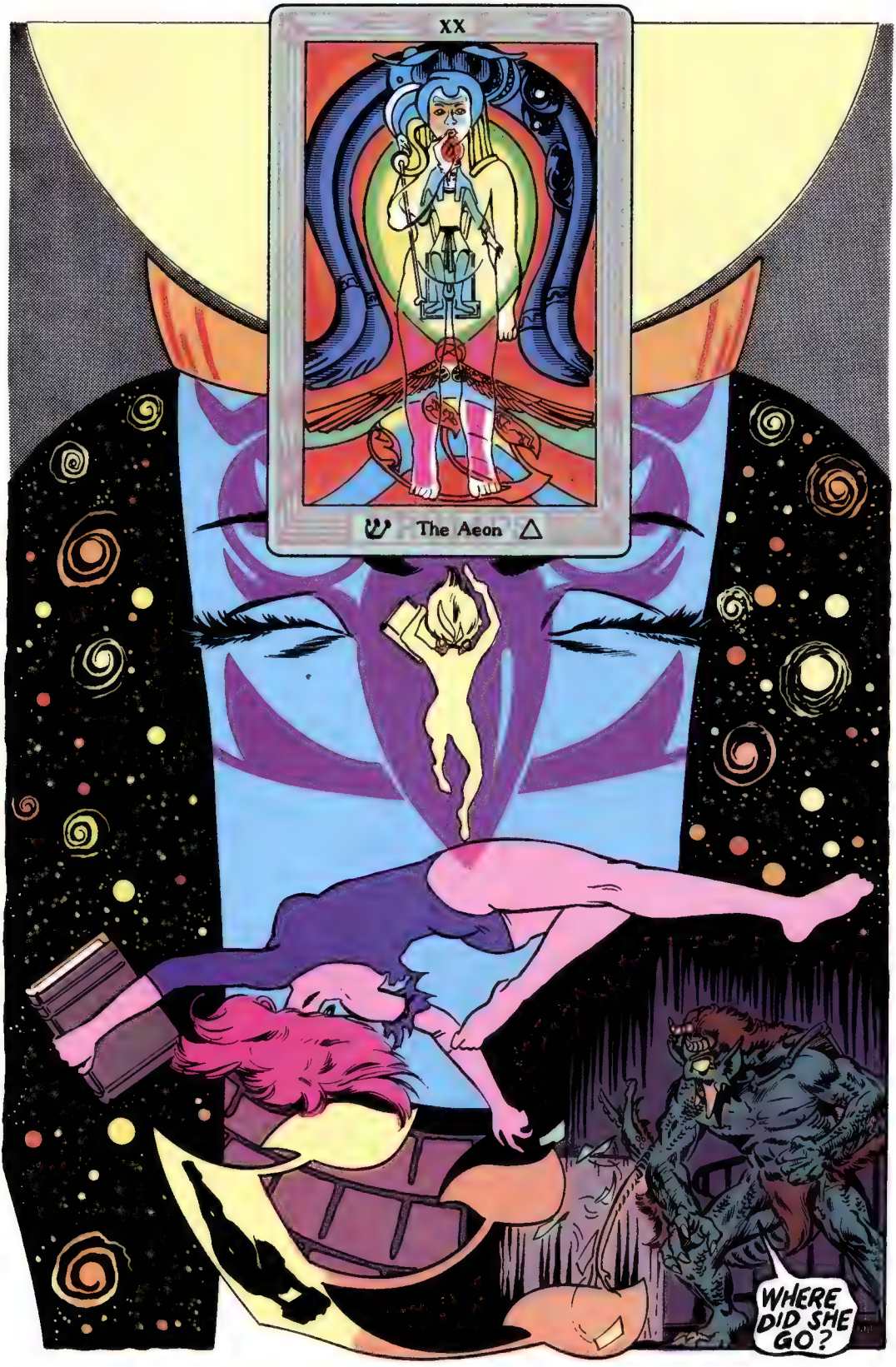
THIS TIME I'LL RIP YOUR LIMBS OFF, ONE BY ONE!
THIS TIME I'LL GNAW THEM DOWN IN FRONT OF YOU--
--AND SHOVE THE SPLINTERED BONES INTO YOUR MOUTH!


I AM THE FIEND!
HAHA HA

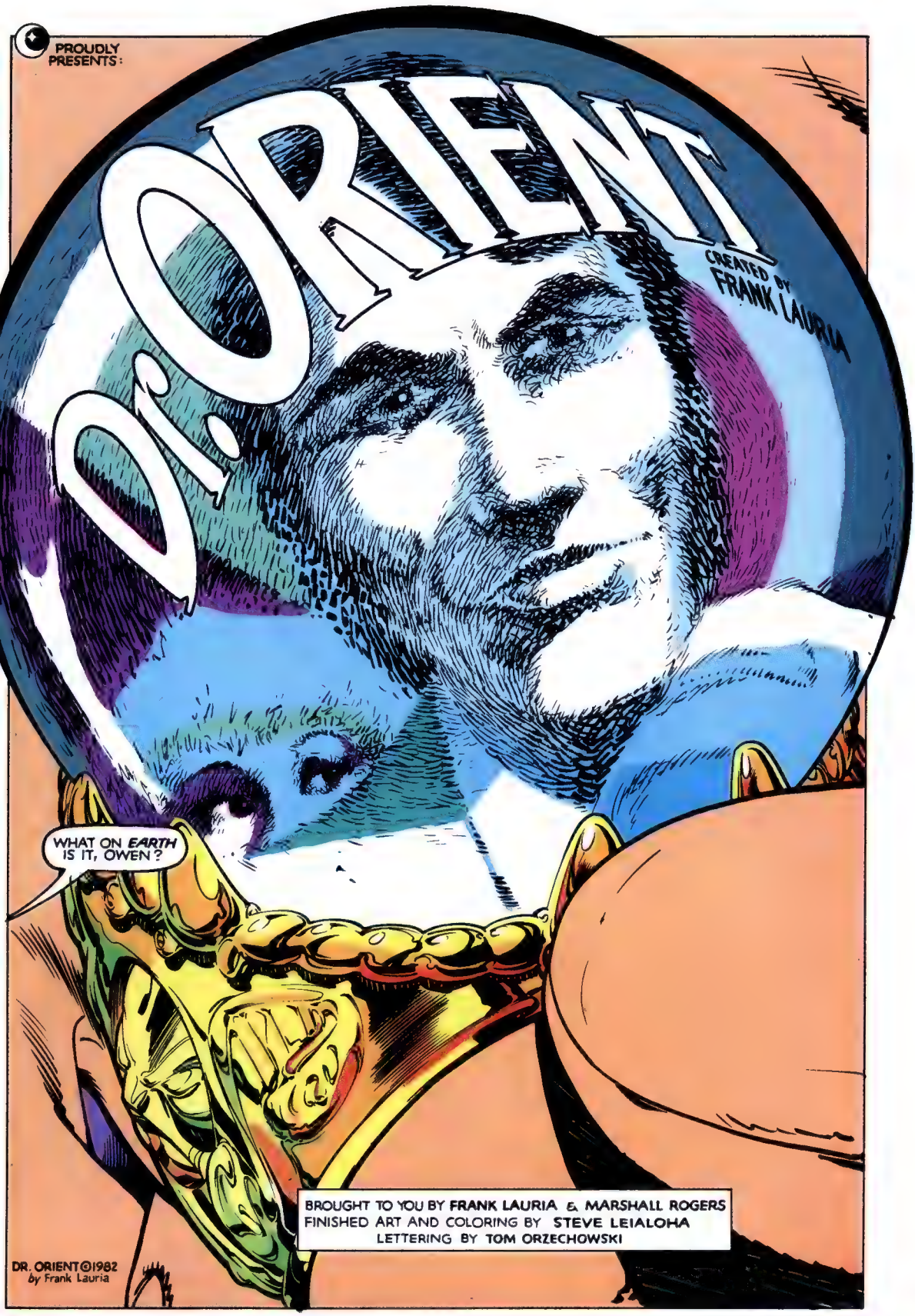

RRRRRR
GONE!
BUT I KNOW NOW, IT'S ONLY FOR THE MOMENT!
THE DEATH CARD MEANT MORE THAN I KNEW! THERE IS NO HOPE FOR ME WITH EARTHLY SPELLS!
I HAVE TAKEN MY UNWANTED GIFT OF ETERNITY AND GIVEN IT OVER TO DESTROYING EVIL!
I HAVE SWORN THAT BOOKS LIKE THIS ONE SHALL NEVER LEAVE MY CARE!
EVEN IF I MUST GO WHERE I'VE NEVER DARED GO BEFORE!
PRAY HECATE I'VE CONFUSED HIM JUST LONG ENOUGH BY COMING HOME--
WAIT! THAT LIGHT--
-- GROWING BRIGHTER--!

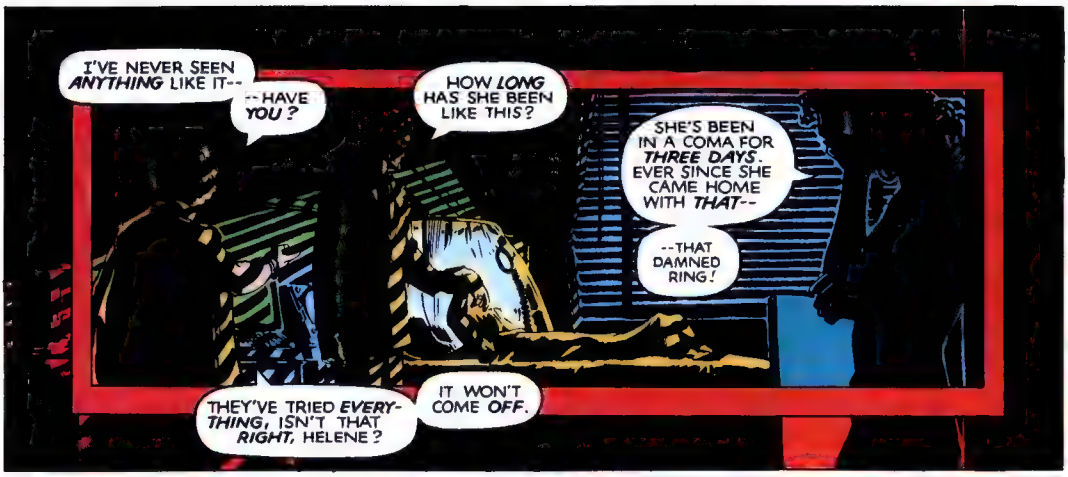
HA HA HA HA HA
DUMAS
POUR LOUER
METROPOLITAIN
ALEXANDRE DUMAS
I LOST HIM!
PWOKH!
I WILL NEVER FORGET YOUR SCENT, ROSA!
SLIME!


SHA
BAM
GIVE ME THAT BOOK!
GIVE ME ALL!
IGOR! IGOR, IF YOU ARE ANYWHERE INSIDE THAT SHELL --!
NO, I SEE NOW THAT YOU ARE NOT!
THEREFORE --
ÆON


XX
The Aeon
WHERE DID SHE GO?

THIS PAINTED CARD--!
ARRR
YOU HAVE FAILED US, MANDRAGORE!
RESUME YOUR MAN-FORM AS BEFORE!
MANDRAGORE! AT LEAST I KNOW HIS MAGICKAL NAME, FOR SOMEDAY I WILL HAVE MY REVENGE!
BUT FOR NOW I AM SAFE FROM HIM! THOUGH I CAN STILL SEE MY NATURAL DIMENSION, NO ONE THERE CAN SEE OR HEAR ME!
I HAVE PASSED TO THE REALM BETWEEN WORLDS, SO--
EH?!!
WELCOME, DARLING ROSA!
WELCOME, MY DEAR, FROM YOUR OWN, DEAD--
--ZACHARIASZ!
TO BE CONTINUED!


PROUDLY PRESENTS:
DR. ORIENT
CREATED BY FRANK LAURIA
WHAT ON EARTH IS IT, OWEN?
BROUGHT TO YOU BY FRANK LAURIA & MARSHALL ROGERS
FINISHED ART AND COLORING BY STEVE LEIALOHA
LETTERING BY TOM ORZECHOWSKI
DR. ORIENT©1982 by Frank Lauria


I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE IT--
--HAVE YOU?
HOW LONG HAS SHE BEEN LIKE THIS?
SHE'S BEEN IN A COMA FOR THREE DAYS. EVER SINCE SHE CAME HOME WITH THAT--
--THAT DAMNED RING!
THEY'VE TRIED EVERYTHING, ISN'T THAT RIGHT, HELENE?
IT WON'T COME OFF.

WHAT MY SISTER TELLS YOU IS TRUE, Dr. ORIENT. KATE FOUND THAT RING IN A JUNK STORE SOMEWHERE
A FEW HOURS LATER SHE FELT DIZZY AND--

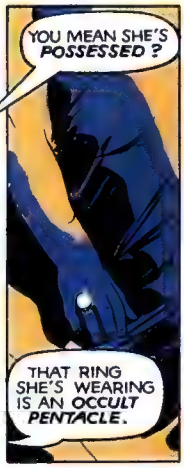
Sob
I NEVER HAD A CHANCE TO ASK HER WHO GAVE IT TO HER.

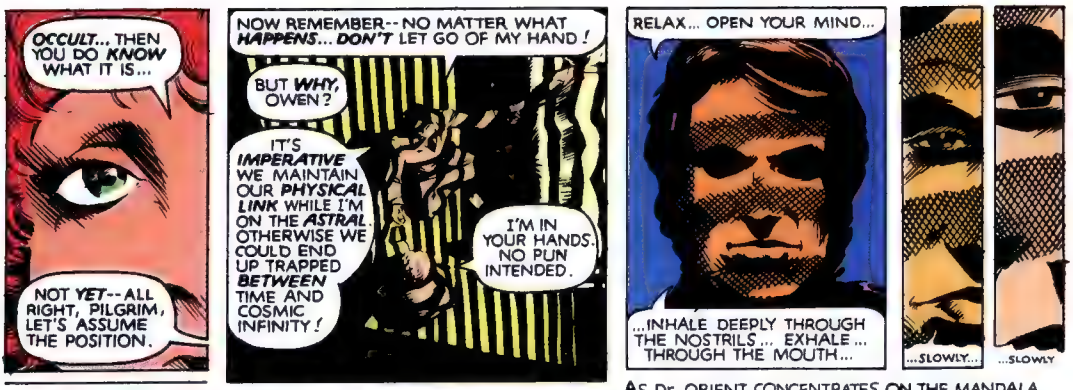
WE HAVE TO HELP HER, OWEN.
I'M NOT SURE I CAN.
SNAP
TAP TAP
ABSENTLY, ORIENT STUDIES THE MANDALA DESIGN ETCHED ON THE SILVER CASE.

YOU'RE OUR LAST HOPE, Dr. ORIENT... THE OTHER DOCTORS RAN ALL KINDS OF TESTS, BUT THEY CAN'T FIND ANYTHING PHYSICALLY WRONG WITH HER!
PLEASE, OWEN...!
AFTER ALL, KATE'S MY... ONLY NIECE--
--WE MUST DO SOMETHING!
VERY WELL... ...BUT I CAN'T PROMISE ANYTHING... MAY I HAVE YOUR PERMISSION TO EXAMINE HER IN PRIVATE?

CERTAINLY DOCTOR... I'LL MAKE SOME TEA.

I HOPE YOU REMEMBER YOUR BREATHING PATTERNS.
OF COURSE ... BUT WHY, OWEN?
I BELIEVE KATE'S ILLNESS IS PSYCHIC RATHER THAN PHYSICAL


YOU MEAN SHE'S POSSESSED?
THAT RING SHE'S WEARING IS AN OCCULT PENTACLE.


OCCULT... THEN YOU DO KNOW WHAT IT IS...
NOT YET--ALL RIGHT, PILGRIM, LET'S ASSUME THE POSITION.
NOW REMEMBER--NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS... DON'T LET GO OF MY HAND!
BUT WHY, OWEN?
IT'S IMPERATIVE WE MAINTAIN OUR PHYSICAL LINK WHILE I'M ON THE ASTRAL. OTHERWISE WE COULD END UP TRAPPED BETWEEN TIME AND COSMIC INFINITY!
I'M IN YOUR HANDS. NO PUN INTENDED.
RELAX... OPEN YOUR MIND...
...INHALE DEEPLY THROUGH THE NOSTRILS... EXHALE... THROUGH THE MOUTH...
...SLOWLY...
...SLOWLY

AS Dr. ORIENT CONCENTRATES ON THE MANDALA DESIGN ON HIS CIGARETTE CASE, HIS SLOW, STEADY VOICE FADES INTO THE BREATHING PATTERN. INHALING THROUGH HIS NOSTRILS, HE OPENS HIS SOLAR PLEXUS, IGNITING THE FIRST CONNECTIONS.

FOCUSING TIGHTER WITH EACH CYCLE OF BREATH, HE FUSES HIS MIND TO THE RHYTHMS, SWIMMING BACK THROUGH HIS BEING TO THE LIGHT...

...THE CHEMICAL SPARK OF HIS PRESENCE...

THE LUMINOUS COMBINATIONS OF HIS REALITY ARE AN INFINITE SWIRL OF SHIFTING SHAPES... SLOWLY ...THEY BEGIN TO SEPARATE, REVEALING GEOMETRIC CLUSTERS OF MEMORY...

A MAGNIFICENT TEMPLE WITH A CRYSTAL DOME...

A WINGED SPHINX CROUCHED BEFORE A GOLDEN PYRAMID.

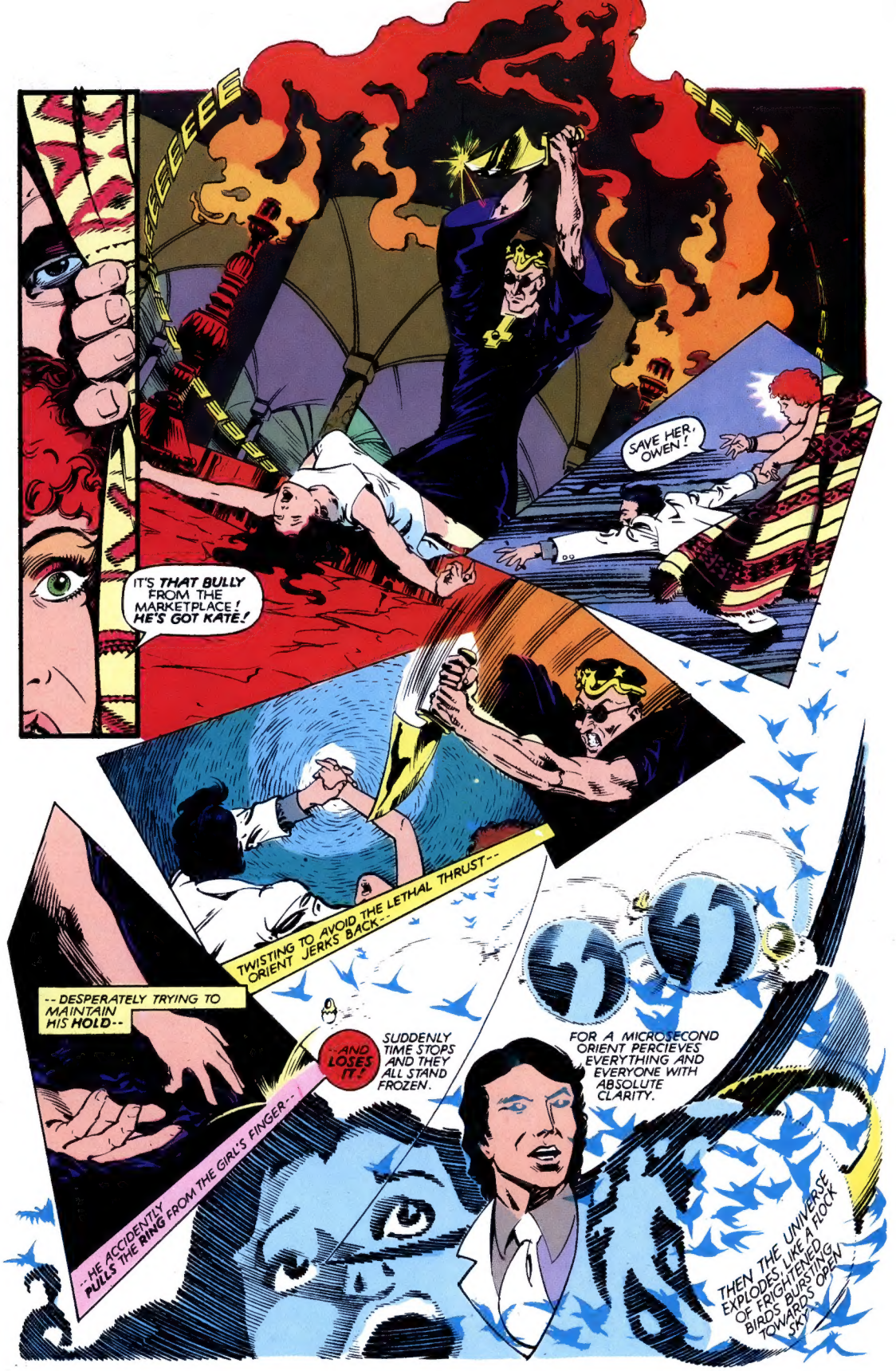
THE RIPPLING IMAGES DISSOLVE LIKE REFLECTIONS IN A LUMINESCENT POOL...

...THEN SUDDENLY BURST INTO A BRILLIANT TAPESTRY OF COLOR, NOISE AND MOVEMENT

WHA...WHAT HAPPENED? WHERE IN BLAZES ARE WE, OWEN?
SEEMS VAGUELY FAMILIAR BUT I CAN'T QUITE PLACE IT...
Allah...
AIEEE -- WHERE DID RICH LOOKING MAN AND BIG LADY COME FR--
-- RICH?-- !!
BEAUTIFUL LADY... I HAVE FANTASTIC CAFTAN--
--JUST FOR YOU-- --TRÈS ELEGANT!
PARLEZ-VOUS FRANCAISE?
NOT NOW--
MY THAT IS A LOVELY PATTERN.
-- NO CAFTAN THANK- YOU!
SOME EXOTIC SCENTS!
YOU LIKE HASHISH MAYBE?
NOT NOW MY GOOD MAN! WE'RE VERY...
OWEN LOOK!! IT'S HER!!
...HOW ABOUT A...

IT'S KATE!
KATE STOP! IT'S ME!!
SYBELLE!
ALLAH!
LET ME GO DAMNIT! DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND? IT'S KATE!
YOU BREAK OUR GRIP AND KATE IS LOST FOR GOOD! NOW COME ON.
NO NEED TO SWEAR AT ME...
LOOK--
NO! YOU UNDERSTAND, DAMNIT!
--THERE SHE GOES. IN THAT TUNNEL...
SCHNELL!
LET'S GO!
OUT OF MY WAY, DUMMKOPF!
HUH--

REMOVE THEM, KLAUS!
JA, MEIN HERR!
OWEN!
THERE SHE GOES!
BY THE TIME ORIENT AND SYBELLE RECOVER THEIR BALANCE, THE GIRL IS OUT OF SIGHT IN THE CROWDED LABYRINTH OF STALLS...
WE'LL NEVER FIND HER IN HERE, OWEN!
C'MON, WE'VE GOT TO TRY!
THOSE GOONS ARE CHASING HER, TOO--
THERE, UP AHEAD--GOING AROUND THAT CORNER!
BLAST! WE LOST THEM!
Pssst--RICH MAN, BEAUTIFUL LADY--
YOU WANT TO FIND GIRL?
QUICK, MAN, WHERE IS SHE?
HOW MUCH?
MY WALLET IS EMPTY! EVERYTHING'S GONE!
SOMEONE MUST'VE PICKED YOUR POCKET.
HARDLY LIKELY HE'D PUT IT BACK.
HOW MUCH, SIR?
HOW'S THIS?
OWEN! THAT'S MY GRANDMA'S!
FOR THIS, I WILL SHOW YOU MYSELF. COME!
STILL ADMIRING HIS VALUABLE NEW TRINKET, THE MERCHANT GUIDES ORIENT AND SYBELLE DOWN A FORGOTTEN, ANCIENT, STONE STAIRWAY.
WHERE ARE YOU TAKING US--THE RIVER STYX?
ALL KIDDING ASIDE, OWEN--I'M FRIGHTENED!
HAVE FAITH, PILGRIM, WE CAN'T ABANDON KATE NOW.
LOVELY LOVELY
AT THE TOP OF THESE STEPS, YOU WILL FIND WHAT YOU SEEK--
--BEHIND THE CURTAIN!
OWEN, HE'S RUNNING OFF--
NEVER MIND...THERE'S A LIGHT UP AHEAD. C'MON.
HERE'S THE CURTAIN.
LISTEN... I HEAR CHANTING?


AGGGGGG
IT'S THAT BULLY FROM THE MARKETPLACE! HE'S GOT KATE!
SAVE HER, OWEN!
TWISTING TO AVOID THE LETHAL THRUST--
ORIENT JERKS BACK--
--DESPERATELY TRYING TO MAINTAIN HIS HOLD--
--AND LOSES IT!
--HE ACCIDENTLY PULLS THE RING FROM THE GIRL'S FINGER--!
SUDDENLY TIME STOPS AND THEY ALL STAND FROZEN.
FOR A MICROSECOND ORIENT PERCIEVES EVERYTHING AND EVERYONE WITH ABSOLUTE CLARITY.
THEN, THE UNIVERSE EXPLODES, LIKE A FLOCK OF FRIGHTENED BIRDS BURSTING TOWARDS OPEN SKY.

OWEN LOOK OUT
SYBELLE, IT'S ALL RIGHT... WE'RE BACK!
OH... huh? OWEN! WHERE WERE WE?
SOMEWHERE IN THE PAST!
THE PAST? BUT HOW DO YOU KNOW?
REMEMBER THE PROBLEM WITH MY WALLET?
YOU SAID EVERYTHING WAS GONE!
CORRECT-- BUT NOW IT'S ALL HERE!
SO WHAT?
OBVIOUSLY, THE CASH, CREDIT CARDS, AND I.D. WHICH I WAS CARRYING CREATED A PARADOX-- WHEN WE WENT BACK IN TIME THEY CEASED TO EXIST-- LIKE US.
BUT WE DID EXIST, OWEN...
...DIDN'T WE?
WELL, WE MADE AN IMPRESSION. THAT'S CERTAIN.
SNAP
SORRY DARLING... I'M AFRAID YOU'RE TOO ABSTRACT FOR ME.
KATE'S RING...
OWEN!
IT'S GONE!
POOR FOOLS-- DO YOU DARE CAST DICE WITH DESTINY?
CONTINUED NEXT ISSUE

novus

RUMOR